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ABSTRACT

The abstract of a scholarly research paper on the status of South Asian women in Canada and tables based both on surveys and questionnaires are contained in this report. In the survey samples, selected cultural, religious, and attitudinal beliefs of South Asian and Anglo-Saxon women living in Canada are presented. Demographic data for participants is provided. Data analysis reveals that (1) education and opportunity are what the South Asian woman wants most from Canada and (2) South Asian Canadians have difficulty dealing with the contrast between a national policy endorsing multiculturalism and the negativism of citizens toward this policy. Further analyses contained in the paper are briefly outlined. Tables of data are included. (WI)

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PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN CANADIAN CONTEXT

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WHAT KIND OF INTEGRATION
DO CANADIANS WANT?

WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY
DO CANADIANS WANT?

IDEAL TYPES
- ANGLO-CONFORMITY
- MELTING POT (American Ideal)
- CULTURAL PLURALISM (Canadian Ideal)

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PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN IN CANADIAN CONTEXT*

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ABSTRACT

The paper commences with a review of statistics and trends in immigration of South Asians into Canada from the 60's until the present time. During this period most South Asians, currently estimated at 1/4 million, entered Canada in response to Canadian needs or for humanitarian reasons. Coverage on South Asians in the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1976), and attitudes toward South Asians identified in a recent national survey (Berry, Kalin and Taylor, 1976) are reported. Angloceltic, French, and other European Canadians show quite a high level of tolerance for ethnic diversity and positive support for a multicultural ideology; respondents would accept immigrants "who are coloured" and "who are highly educated". However, the study revealed that racially different groups were placed at the bottom of the perceived ethnic hierarchy. South Asians, about whom Pitman (1977) states: "Probably no group of immigrants has ever come to Canada with more skills and more advanced educational background . . ." were assigned very low rankings by respondents.

The paper reports exploratory data based on the responses of a random sampling of white Canadians (N=189, males and females, mainly students) to a questionnaire probing their perceptions of South Asian women in the Canadian context (Table 1). Rankings of common traits elicited and trait descriptions are presented in three categories: positive/liked traits, negative/disliked traits, and traits which shift from a positive to a negative direction. Further, respondents' statements are classified along a favourable-unfavourable continuum (Table 2). Contact with South Asian women did not necessarily result in respondents moving in a positive direction.

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Selected cultural, religious, & attitudinal beliefs about social behaviour drawn from a larger survey of women of South Asian and Anglo Saxon origins (N=105 for each group) are presented. The women were interviewed in their home settings, by trained women interviewers. The samples were drawn from two small cities in Ontario and were matched by residential area. Origins and religious affiliation of the diverse South Asian sample are given in Tables 3 and 4. Salient demographic data for the two samples are given in Table 5. The groups were comparable on several dimensions (age, length of marriage, number of children, family salary, etc.); South Asian respondents were better educated at the post graduate level. Subsequent analyses of achievement data were controlled for this finding (Naidoo, 1977).

The following analyses reveal a dualistic nature to the responses of South Asian women: (1) content analyses of responses to a projective-type "Who am I" test (Table 6), (2) frequency of responses to tests of cultural, religious, and philosophical beliefs (Tables 7, 8, 9) and (3) responses to a question probing "What I want/do not want of Canada (Table 10). On the one hand the South Asian woman exhibits the strong religious-philosophical values and concern for home-family generally attributed to her; on the other hand, she exhibits a clear orientation toward education and achievement for herself and her family. Education and opportunity for all are the characteristics she admires and wants most of Canada.

The dynamics of in-outgroup relationships with reference to the South Asian minority group and the larger Canadian society are discussed within the context of Allport's paradigm of the causes of prejudice (1958) (Fig. 1). An attempt is made to understand the data reported in Tables 1 and 2 from the perspective of the several dimensions contributing to prejudice. Further, the implications of the data for a pluralistic society are examined with reference to two models of ethnic integration discussed in the literature: the Anglo Conformity Model and the Cultural Pluralism Model (Hughes and Kallen, 1974) (Fig. 11). The data presented in Table 1 suggest that people in the majority group expect the ethnic minority to renounce at

least the visible and distinctive aspects of its ancestral culture and life style, i.e., majority group people seem to be responding in terms of the Anglo Conformity Model of ethnic integration. By contrast, the Cultural Pluralism Model promoted by the Canadian government encourages the retention and development of the ancestral culture and identity. This study found a general lack of sensitivity to official policy regarding multiculturalism, thus endorsing a similar finding emerging from the study of Berry et al. (1976). It would seem, therefore, that while Canadians are tolerant of ethnic diversity at an abstract ideological level, they react differently at the concrete experiential level. South Asian languages, food, dress, mannerisms, values, were at times sources of extreme irritation.

For South Asian Canadians the discrepancies perceived between national policy i.e., the expectation of retaining cultural identity with dignity, and the resistance-negativism-hostility encountered in interpersonal relationships creates a dilemma for which they are unprepared.

Implications of the data for potential racial conflict are viewed in the context of the following sources of data: (1) the Federal government "Green Paper" on immigration 1975, (2) the findings of racial attitudes in Toronto reported by Dr. Frances Henry of York University, 1978 (3) the study of Berry et al. (1976) on multiculturalism, and (4) the Pitman report, 1977, a study of racially motivated incidents in Metro Toronto, presented in a document entitled: Now is Not too Late.

The paper closes with a discussion of the potential usefulness of Campbell's (1963) conceptualization of "Hurdles" and "Thresholds" (Fig. 111) for understanding the dynamics of social distance relationships for people in the middle range of polarized liberal and prejudiced individuals, in particular with regard to changing attitudes in a more positive direction.

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Table 1

CANADIAN PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN* N = 189

TRAIT DESCRIPTION	MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES**
Liked, Positive Traits	Beauty Grace Intelligence Femininity
Disliked, Negative Traits	Unfamiliar Odours (Food) Abrupt Mannerisms Traditional Customs (Dress, "Tikka") Accent, Home Language (Public Use) Class Orientedness, Arrogance Ethnocentricity, Groupiness
Shifts from Positive, Liked Traits to Negative Disliked Traits	Quietness, Politeness to---- Aloof, Unfriendly, Lacking Vitality Commitment to Family to---- Subservience to Men Some Admiration for Retention of Home Culture to---- Unwillingness to Integrate, Rigidity

*Exploratory Study ----Findings should not be generalized until further data are collected.

**Within each category traits are ranked by frequency; negative comments had a stronger affective tone than positive comments.

Table 2

FAVOURABILITY* OF CANADIAN PERCEPTIONS OF SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

N = 189

RESPONDENTS	HIGHLY FAVOURABLE	FAVOURABLE DIRECTION	NEUTRAL	UNFAVOURABLE DIRECTION	HIGHLY UNFAVOURABLE
Student Males N-= 65	1	16	30	14	4
Student Females N = 76	2	26	28	18	2
Non-Student Males N = 11		1	6	2	2
Non-Student Females N = 37	3	10	8	12	4

* Based on Judgments of balance between positive versus negative traits assigned; neutral point describes statements such as: "no comment", "can't judge", "don't know", "no contact", etc. Respondents in the neutral category generally had no contact with South Asian Women.

Table 3

DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY SAMPLE

Home Country	# Families	10% Sample	Obtained Sample	% Frequency
India	250	25	55	52.4
Pakistan	80	8	12	11.4
Bangledesh	10	1	3	2.9
Sri Lanka	10	1	4	3.8
East Africa	150	15	10*	9.5
Guyana	110	11	12	11.4
Trinidad	75	8	9	8.6
Totals	685	69	105	100.0

*under represented

local South Asian population ---approx. 3,000

Table: 4

SURVEY SAMPLE BY RELIGION

Home Country	Religion	Frequency	Total (N = 105)
INDIA	Hindu	41	
	Sikh	8	
	Muslim	4	
	Christian	3	
	Jain	1	55
PAKISTAN	Christian	7	
	Muslim	5*	12
BANGLEDESH	Muslim	3	3
SRI LANKA	Christian	4	4
EAST AFRICA	Ismaili] Uganda	5*	
	Ithna-Asheri]	3	
	Hindu (Kenya)	1	
	Muslim (Tanzania)	1	10
GUYANA	Hindu	6	
	Muslim	3	
	Christian	3	12
TRINIDAD	Hindu	2	
	Christian	7	9

*under represented

Table: 5

SALIENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA (N = 105 South Asians; 105 Anglo-Saxons* Canadians)

VARIABLES		South Asians Frequency	Anglo-Saxons Frequency
Woman's Age:	20-24	24	17
	25-29	23	15
	30-34	24	23
	35-39	20	11
	40-44	7	11
	45-49	6	8
	50+	1	17
Length of Marriage: (years)			
	1-5	33	25
	6-10	22	18
	11-15	25	16
	16-20	9	11
	20 +	10	30
# of Children:	1	18	14
	2	31	20
	3	16	32
	4	5	10
	5+	4	3
Length of stay in Canada (years)	1	10	
	2	13	
	3	16	
	4	7	
	.	.	
	6	14	
	.	.	
	10-16	14	

(*Data missing on many items)

VARIABLES		South Asians Frequency	Anglo-Saxons Frequency
Family Salary:			
	Under $4,999	0	6
	$5,999 -9,999	16	12
	$10,000-14,999	13	11
	$15,000-19,999	20	20
	$20,000-24,999	6	12
	$25,000-29,999	9	6
	$30,000 +	7	15
Woman's Education:			
	Primary School	87	92
	High School	85	90
	Clerical	18	16
	Secretarial	24	18
	Teaching Dipl.	17	14
	Nursing Dipl.	2	8
	B. A. Degree	38	31
	M. A. Degree	18	3
	Medical Degree	1	0
	Ph.D.	1	0

Woman's Religion:	Hindu	46	Rom.Cath.	10	
	Muslim	20	Prot.	74	
	Christ.	22	Jewish	1	
	Other	12	Other	19	
Immigration Status:	Citizen	27		105	
	Landed	73			
	Visitor	5			

Table: 8

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOUTH ASIAN "WHO AM I" RESPONSES (N = 104)

Cue Phrase	Most Frequent Responses	Categorization
1. "I have"	small children	family-centred
	good husband	
	car, home	ownership
	music, reading	interests
	sense of humour,	
	education	personal traits
2. "I am"	a wife, mother	family-centred
	a woman	female identity
	nice, happy, impatient	personality traits
	a teacher, typist, student	occupation
3. "I want"	good education for children	family education
	realize own potential	self-achievement
	happy family	family-centred
	car, home, money	material possessions
	to help others	other-oriented
	perfection, truth,	
	peace of mind	spiritual state
4. "My goals are"	further own education	self-improvement
	successful family life	family-centred
	share Indian culture	inter-group relationship
5. "I would like to (be)	good mother, wife	family oriented
	social worker, teacher	career aspirations
	useful, educated, learn	
	skills (English, driving pottery)	self-improvement
	close rich-poor gap,	
	work for broken homes	meaningful service

Table: 7

SALIENT VALUES IN LIFE *

		Most Important		Important		Neither Important Nor Unimportant		N	N			
		SA**	AS	SA	AS	SA	AS	SA	AS	X^2	df	P
Contemporary	developing the self	52	18	41	51	6	29	102	103	33.85	4	.001
	intellectual ability	26	5	60	57	15	31	103	104	26.46	4	.001
	self confidence	66	48	35	56	2	1	103	105	8.00	2	.05
	sexuality	64	32	35	53	4	17					
	perseverance	63	35	40	69	-	-	103	104	14.62	1	.001
Traditional	doing one's duty	20	6	35	25	35	39	107	101	22.08	4	.001
	co-operation	55	20	39	66	7	13	102	104	27.85	4	.001
	respect for elders	37	19	61	61	4	23	102	103	19.15	2	.001
	first loyalty to family	59	35	40	57	4	8	103	103	13.44	3	.01
	obedience to authority	36	15	49	58	13	23	102	104	14.83	4	.01

* A 5 category scale was used, ranging from most important-most unimportant. Only 3 categories are reported; unreported categories were endorsed with low frequency.

** SA = South Asian
AS = Anglo Saxon

Table: 8

RELIGIOUS VALUES AND CHANGE

South Asian Religion	Respondent's Frequency	Family Frequency
Hindu	46	48
Moslem	20	20
Christian	22	21
Other	12	11

South Asian Marriage	Frequency
By parents	49
Own Choice "love marriage"	43

Religiosity	South Asian Frequency	Anglo Saxon Frequency
very religious	23	13
somewhat religious	67	56
not religious	8	19
not religious at all	3	9
N =	101	97

(X^2 = 11.167, 3 df, $p < .01$)

Religious Change	South Asian Frequency	Anglo Saxon Frequency
changed very much	4	17
changed somewhat	14	39
not changed much	30	18
not changed at all	56	17
N =	104	91

(X^2 = 43,000, 3 df, $p < .001$)

Hindu Commandments - Modelled by parents for children

Respect for elders
Be helpful
Always be hospitable
Give, share - don't expect anything in return
Never hurt anyone
Never tell a lie
Always be tolerant
Respect other human beings as human beings
Do your duty (Dharma)
All religions are one

Table: 9

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS

Influence of Basic Values	Karma Will of Allah/God		Dharma Doing one's duty by religion		Varna Doing one's duty by rules of caste/ social class		Dieties Saints/ Prophets	
	Frequency		Frequency		Frequency		Frequency	
	SA*	AS	SA	AS	SA	AS	SA	AS
very strong	33	18	34	20	9	3	8	3
strong	27	35	32	34	16	23	11	5
little influence	14	17	12	26	15	32	15	17
very little	11	24	9	12	40	33	23	53
x^2 values	10.136, 3df		9.144, 3df		10.412, 3df		13.551, 3df	
P values	$<.05$		$<.05$		$<.05$		$<.001$	

*SA = South Asian
AS = Anglo Saxon

Table: 10

ATTITUDES TOWARD CANADIAN (WESTERN) CULTURE
(N = 105 South Asians)

Most Influence	F	Admire & Want	F	Dislike & Don't Want	F	Most Different From Home Culture	F	Want to Keep From Home Culture	F
educational aspirations	58	educational aspirations	64	ideas about family relationships	51	ideas on marriage	52	ideas about family relationships	65
opportunities for all	55	opportunities for all	54	ideas on marriage	44	ideas about family relationships	51	religious ideas	40
dress	36	dress	28	ideas about material things	28	food & drink	36	ideas on marriage	36
social customs	36	privacy at social arrangements	20	privacy at social relationships	19	social customs	35	social customs	34

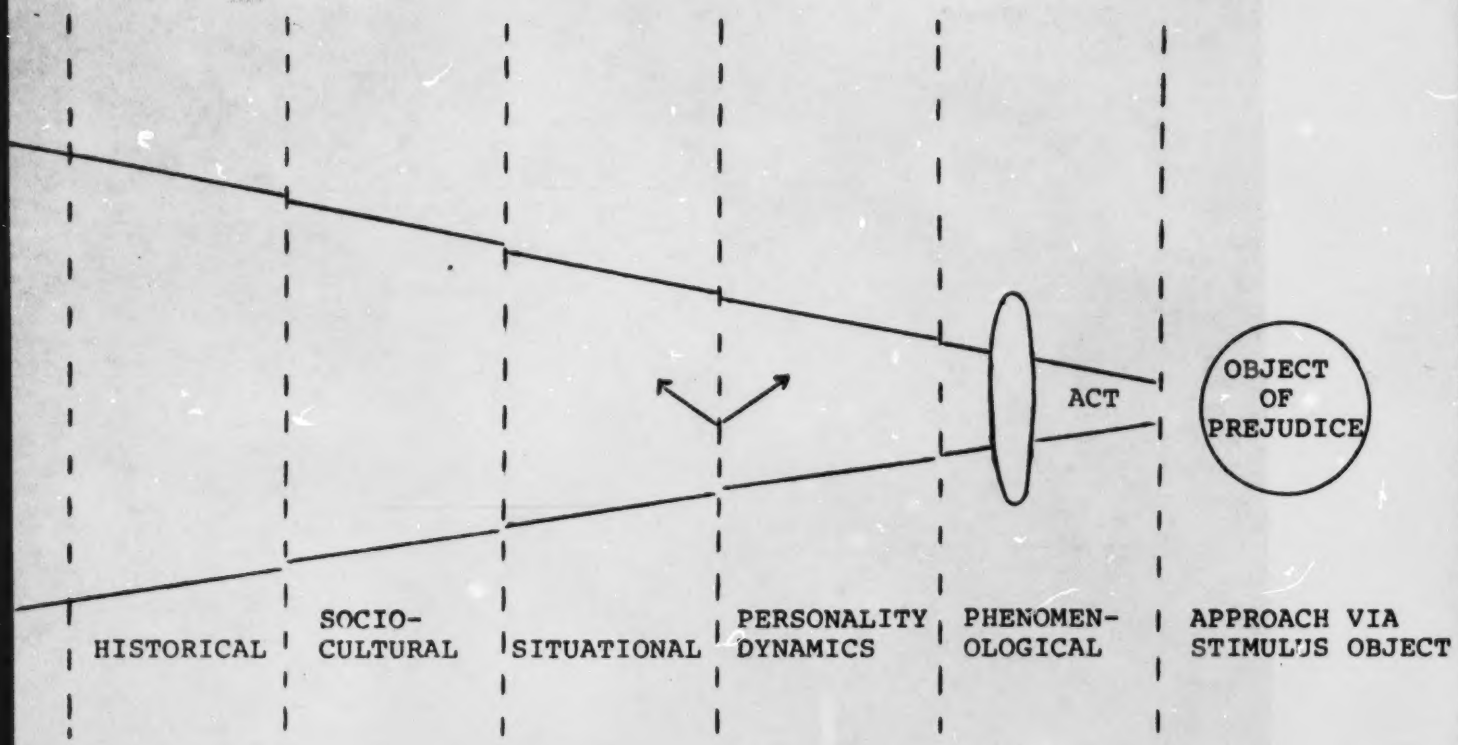

FIG. I THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF PREJUDICE (ALLPORT, 1958)

FIG. II MODELS OF ETHNIC INTEGRATION (HUGHES & KALLEN, 1974)

"IDEAL TYPE" MODELS	CONDITIONS	ACCULTURATION PROCESS
1. Anglo-Conformity	Renounce Ancestral Culture. Adopt Values, Life Styles of Majority.	One Way Process Subordination/Extinction of Identity
2. Melting Pot (American Ideal)	Extensive Social Interaction. Blending of Cultures to Create New Society	Two Way Process New Identity
3. Cultural Pluralism* (Canadian Ideal)	Unspecified Degree of Integration by Minorities for Effective Participation in Institutions in Larger Society	Symbiotic Co-existence. Peripheral Contact Retain Identity

*(Multi-Culturalism or Mosaic)

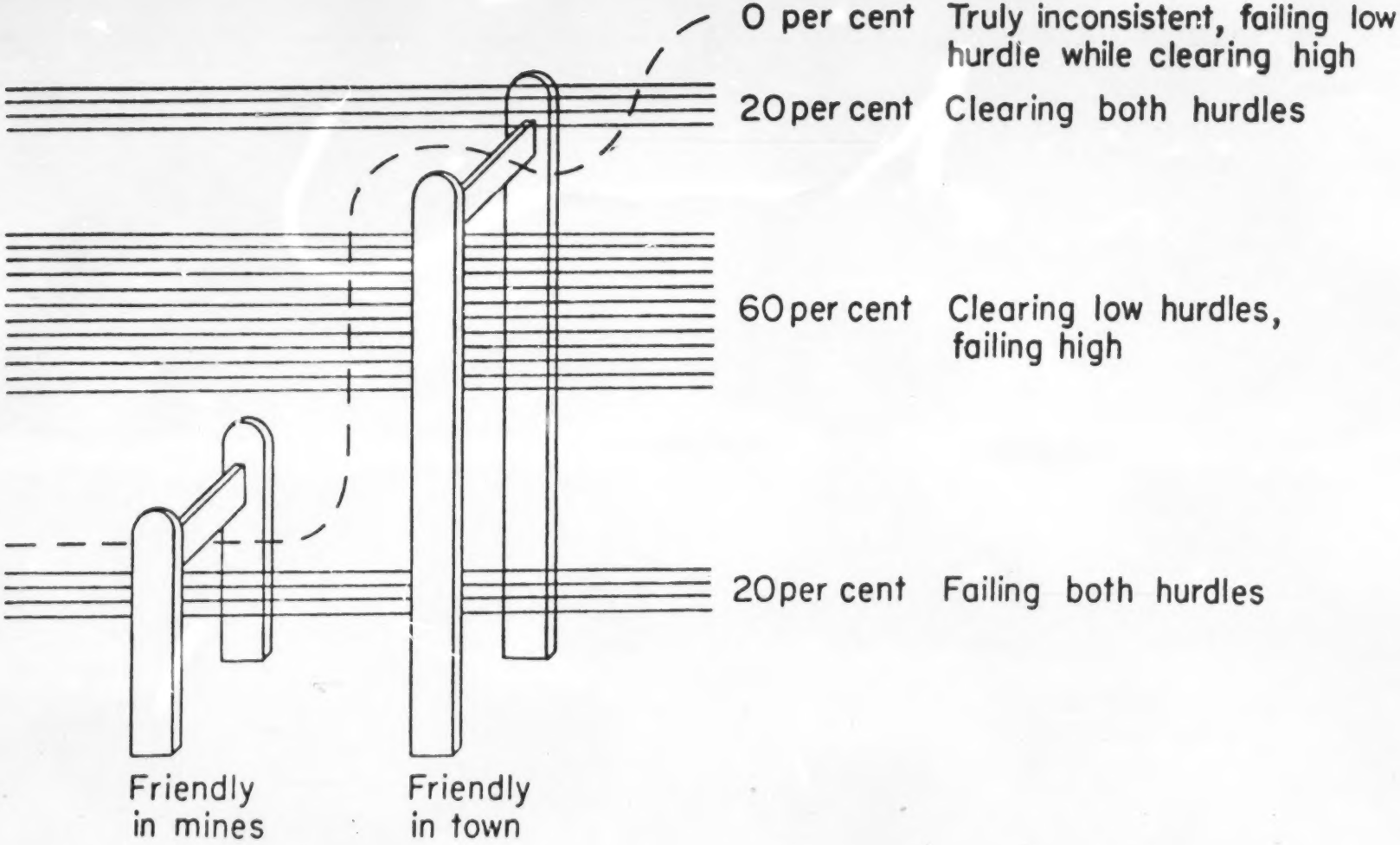

FIG. III Minard's data on miner's attitudes toward Negroes illustrating the concepts of "thresholds" and "hurdles" (Campbell, 1963)